

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

The Philosophy of Plotinos. (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Co., 1306 Filbert Street). This pamphlet is very unassuming in its appearance. No price is stated, and it is doubtful whether it is obtainable in the book market. The author seems to be MR. KENNETH SYLVAN GUTHRIE, of Philadelphia, 1203 North Forty-first Street, and the pamphlet belongs to that class of books which the reviewer is apt to lay aside without further notice. By glancing over its contents, however, we find that it is a very concise and scholarly statement of the doctrines of Plotinos in connexion with the preceding Greek philosophy. The author is apparently an admirer of Neo-Platonism, and that is the main criticism we have to make of the book. He says on page 21; "As Neo-Platonism is the last phase of Greek philosophy, we may look upon his (that is, Plotinos's) system as that which represents the philosophy of Greece in its noblest and most perfect proportions." Plotinos really represents Platonism run to seed. The height of Greek philosophy is, according to the orthodox conception, the period of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, which degenerated under the influence of mystic tendencies into the orientalised Platonism of Ammonius Sakkas, Porphyry, Philo and others. Philo happened to be the Jewish interpreter of Platonism, and was as such best known to the early Christians. Thus Philo became the channel through whom Platonic ideas, among which the conception of the Logos was the most important one, were instilled into Christianity. Plotinos was not a Christian, but represented a reaction against the Philonic conception of Platonism, and was in his day, in spite of the great similarities that obtain between his system and the doctrines of Christianity, a representative author of the noblest pagan thought. The Christian authors, among them Augustine, are greatly indebted to Plotinos for suggestions and philosophical ideas.

From the Upanishads. By CHARLES JOHNSTON. The author has just published a dainty booklet *From the Upanishads* which comes from the press of Thomas B. Mosher, of Portland, Maine. It contains the three most famous Upanishads: (1) "In the House of Death" (*Cathaa Upanishad*); (2) "A Vedic Master" (*Prashme Upanishad*); (3) "That Thou Art" (*Chhandogya Upanishad No. 6*). As Mr. Johnston is possessed of literary taste, we have no doubt that these three Upanishads will be very welcome, as being more readable than the heavy translations in the *Sacred Books of the East*.

Ferdinand Lassalle and Helene von Dönniges. A Modern Tragedy. By ELIZABETH E. EVANS. (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.) Ferdinand Lassalle, one of the most prominent leaders of the social democratic party of Germany, ended his life in a duel which originated in his relations to Helene von Dönniges, and Mrs. Evans has devoted the present booklet to an exposition of this tragedy, so important in the evolution of the labor movement in Germany. Lassalle, born in 1825 of Jewish parents, was very ambitious, and perhaps at the same time careless in his relations to the fair sex. Helene von Dönniges (a bright girl who at one time was greatly influenced by the desire of emancipation from the traditional bonds of society), was very sympathetic to him in character, and it seems natural that when they met they should feel strongly attracted to one another. The details of the tragedy need not be enumerated now. It proved fatal to Lassalle, who, although he was a very good shot, was killed by his adversary, Herr von Racowitza, to the great regret of the social democrats of Germany, who lost in him a leader who has not been replaced since.

Mr. C. LEVIAS has recently published *A Grammar of the Aramaic Idiom Contained in the Babylonian Talmud* (Cincinnati, The Block Publishing Co., 1896). The literature on the grammar of the idiom of the Babylonian Talmud, which is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, is very scanty, and the author of this little treatise has sought to supply some of its defects. The long and eventful history of the Aramaic language, one dialect of which was spoken by Christ, and which was still a living language in the tenth century, is very interesting. Mr. Levias's booklet, however, is designed, not for the general reader, but for the specialist.

Mr. Charles Johnston has translated the *Atmabodha* by Shankara from the Sanskrit into English, and published it in attractive form. Copies are obtainable from the author, 144 Madison Avenue, New York. Mr. Johnston has translated the term *Atmabodha* by "awakening to the self," which, although not literal, may be quite appropriate. It treats the old Delphic problem of the γνῶθι σεαυτόν, or self-cognition, answering the question as to the nature of self in the spirit of the philosophy of the Upanishads, which hypostatizes the self as an independent being separate from the body and the senses as well as from the mind and the soul. This self is supposed to be the Lord of all the faculties of man and is nothing but a metaphysical dream, which, although distinguished from the soul and all the functions of the psychic life, is identified with consciousness and ultimately declared to be the Brahm, or the eternal deity that is omnipresent in the whole world. The *Atmabodha* is a very brief essay, or rather a string of aphorisms, and contains beautiful gems of thought side by side with purely metaphysical assumptions. We grant however, that an interpretation is possible that would conciliate Shankara, the representative thinker of Brahmanism, with Buddha who denied the existence of a self as an independent entity in man.

The whole philosophy of Shankara, the Hindu sage, may be summed up in the following verses of Mr. Johnston's translation :

"Through the power of varying disguises, race, name, and rank are accredited to the Self, as difference of taste and color to water."

"Through unwisdom, the doings of its disguise, emotion, are referred to the Self; as the motion of the waves to the moon reflected in water."

"Desire and longing, pleasure and pain, move in the soul when it is manifested; but in dreamlessness there is none of them, when the soul sinks to rest: therefore they are of the soul, not of the Self."

"The causal disguise comes into being through the beginningless, ineffable error of separateness. Let him apprehend the Self as other than these three disguises."

"By union with these veils and vestures, the pure Self appears to share their nature; as a crystal seems blue beside a vesture of blue."

"Let him diligently discern the pure inner Self from the veils that cling to it; as rice from chaff and straw by winnowing."

"Distinct from the body, powers, emotion, soul, which are of the world, let him find the Self, who, king-like, beholds all the doings of these."

"Without quality or action, everlasting, without doubt or stain, changeless formless, ever free, am I, the spotless Self."

"Putting away all disguises, according to the saying: 'It is not this! It is not this!' let him see the oneness of the personal self in life and the Supreme Self, according to the mighty precept."

The *Viveka Chintamani* is a periodical edited by C. V. Swaminathaiyer, in the vernacular of the language spoken at Madras. It is devoted to the diffusion of knowledge among the native inhabitants of India, and it publishes articles and books of Western civilisation for the enlightenment of the Hindus. While the standard of the publication is kept at a high level, it is nevertheless popular enough to be of practical use to the average educated native, and it is naturally recommended by a great number of prominent men, both English and native. It is a matter of course that an institution like this has a hard road to travel; for any publication which is not for amusement, but endeavors to diffuse knowledge, is not liable to pay its way. It ought to be supported somehow for the same reason that our universities are. Who would try to run a university on a paying basis? We need not add that this kind of work belongs to the class of missionary work. It is not the missionary work of any of the sects, but it is missionary work of an unsectarian, or rather supersectarian kind. It is the propagation of the scientific spirit of the age, which, if it spreads among the Hindus will prove to be the lever by which the national life can be raised to a higher plane.

President William F. Warren delivered an impressive oration in Tremont Temple, Boston, on convocation day, on one of the Buddhist ordination questions, "Art thou a human being?" It is well known that before being admitted to the Buddhist order an aspirant must take the ten vows, such as not to destroy life, not to take anything not given, to be chaste, not to speak falsely, not to drink intoxicating liquors, etc. At the same time they answer questions, one of which is, "Art thou a human being?" the meaning of which is commonly explained by the story that once a naga or a serpent had become a monk and assumed his serpent-form at certain times. It is on this question that President Warren delivered a splendid discourse, impressing his audience with the dignity of manhood. At the conclusion of his speech he reminded his auditors of Terrence's slave, who was greeted with applause when he said on the stage: "I am a man." "But," adds President Warren, "no man can be completely human until the human is complete. The slave and his wild applauders might better have paused, and, with the great Christian poet of our day, exclaimed: "Man is not man as yet."

The Liberal Congress of Religion will hold its annual meeting on the Exposition grounds in Nashville, October 19th to 24th. The program will consist of two sessions a day, one in the forenoon and one in the evening, with informal query meetings in the afternoon. The whole will close with popular meetings to be held on Sunday the 24th in the city. There will be sessions devoted to the discussion of the Bible in the Light of Modern Thought, comparative religion, the sociological problems and duties which now confront the churches, the Parliament of Religions, its work in the past and its influence on the future, the influence of religion on morals, etc., etc. Special rates will be arranged for on railroads and at hotels. The prospect of a grand success is well assured and the only thing still missing is money, for there are great expenses connected with the preliminary preparations. Any one who is desirous of helping the cause of the Liberal Congress is invited to join and send his annual assessment fee of \$5.00, or life membership of \$25.00. Special subscriptions of larger sums are respectfully solicited and will be gratefully received by the General Secretary, Dr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, 3939 Langley Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

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